DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 454 625 EA 031 135

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TITLE A Case Study of Resource Reallocation To Implement a Whole School Reform Model and Boost Student Achievement: Parnell Elementary School.

INSTITUTION Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Madison.; Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

SPONS AGENCY National Inst. on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management (ED/OERI), Washington, DC.

PUB DATE 2000-03-00

NOTE 35p.

CONTRACT R3086A60003

AVAILABLE FROM Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1025 W. Johnson St., Room 653, Madison, WI 53706-1796. Tel:608-263-4260; Web site: http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/cpre.

PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; *Educational Change; Elementary Education; *School Effectiveness; *School Restructuring; *School Schedules

IDENTIFIERS Direct Instruction

ABSTRACT

This study outlines the redesign of an elementary school, including the cost of the redesign. The school had been placed in the lowest category of the district's accountability system. Redesign meant a new principal, staff, schedule, philosophy, and curriculum. Direct Instruction was selected as the whole-school reform for literacy and math programs, with ability grouping based on Direct Instruction assessments. Four hours of additional instruction were gained by eliminating recess. Two daily block times of 90 minutes and 60 minutes were set aside for uninterrupted literacy instruction. Class size was limited to 18, as opposed to the previous 25. Decisions concerning programs and resources were team based, with a vertical multigrade team and a horizontal team for grade-level issues. A sample schedule allowing for block time and team planning is provided. The financial aspects of these changes are also examined. To fund additional classroom teachers for smaller classes, instructional aides were eliminated, federal Title I dollars were reallocated, federal class-size-reduction funds were used, and extra district funds were gained from extra weighting for every student. Other cuts included the librarian becoming a Direct Instruction facilitator and the forming of a partnership with a community group to provide social- and mental-health services. (RKJ)

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A Case Study of Resource Reallocation to Implement a Whole School Reform Model and Boost Student Achievement:

Parnell Elementary School

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March, 2000

The research reported in this article was supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policy-Making and Management to the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) and the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison (Grant No. OERI-R3086A60003). The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Institute of Educational Governance, Finance, Policy-Making and Management, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, the Institutional partners of CPRE, or the Wisconsin Center for Education Research.

EA 031135

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Introduction

Parnell Elementary School[1] is a PreK-8 school of approximately 400 students located in a large Midwestern city. Most of the students at the school are African-American (98%), and the other two percent are Asian. Because of the school's close proximity to a magnet school for students with limited English proficiency, there are no such students at Parnell. However, approximately 18 percent of all students qualify for special education services and 95 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

Parnell is located in Sentry Hill School District, which has about 50,000 students. The state in which this district is located has content and performance standards in grades 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12. The state administers proficiency tests in those grades each year, and the district administers "off-grade" proficiency tests in the other grades. The district has adopted a strong decentralized management strategy. In 1994, it partnered with New American Schools, allowing schools to select and implement a number of different comprehensive school designs. In 1996, Sentry Hill adopted a comprehensive strategic plan, which required development of a comprehensive accountability system. The accountability system now includes performance improvement targets for each school. It provides rewards for schools that meet or beat the targets, help for those that just miss, and redesigns schools that consistently fail to produce improvements. The strategic plan also encourages schools to create a team-based school structure, with each team coordinated by a lead teacher. Also, beginning in 1999-2000, Sentry Hill provided each school with a lump sum budget through a comprehensive, needs-based, school funding formula.

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During the 1997-98 school year, the Sentry Hill School District made the decision to "redesign" Parnell Elementary School. This meant that persistently low student achievement at the school had led the district to classify it in the lowest category of the district's accountability system. Schools placed in this category were either closed or redesigned for the first time in 1998, and Parnell was one of two schools that the district decided to redesign. Being redesigned meant a new principal, new staff, new schedule, new philosophy and new curriculum, along with many other changes. It should be noted, however, that at Parnell, the principal who had only been at the school for one year prior to the redesign interviewed to come back as the principal of the redesigned school, and was rehired. Some of the original staff members were also rehired. Therefore, the changes to the school were not as drastic as they might have been, and many of the final decisions on what should be changed for the redesign were made by the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) at the school, which consisted of the principal and team leaders. The district redesign team made a number of recommendations, but the school staff made most of the final decisions about how school resources would be reallocated to support the elements of the redesign.

This case study will outline the changes that were made at the school as a result of the district redesign process. It is divided into two main sections: The Redesign Process and Paying for the Changes. Each section is then further divided into subsections that detail the various decisions made in both the redesign and resource reallocation processes.

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[1] The names of both the elementary school and the district in which it is located have been changed to

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The Redesign Process

The first section of this case study describes the process by which Parnell Elementary School underwent substantial reform. This section is divided into subsections: Background to the Redesign Process; Choosing the New School Design and Curriculum; Implementing Inclusion; Reduced Class Sizes; Creating a Team-Based School; Creating a Schedule to Support Team Planning; Professional Development; and Accountability.

Background to the Redesign Process

In November of 1998, Sentry Hill School District administrators unveiled a new accountability plan to ensure that its schools were making progress toward the student achievement goals that they had set for the district. This accountability plan involved evaluating schools on the basis of achievement data and other pertinent information, on the basis of which schools were placed in one of four categories. In the first year, seven schools were placed in the lowest possible category, redesign, which meant that the superintendent had to decide whether the schools would be redesigned or closed. Parnell was one of the two schools placed in that category and the district decided to redesign them.

Choosing the New School Design and Curriculum

Under the Sentry Hill accountability plan, the first step in the redesign process was to remove all staff in the school. Next, an eight-member redesign committee was selected, half of whom were appointed by the district and half by the union. The role of this committee was to work with the community to select the educational strategy for the

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preserve their anonymity.

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redesigned school, which, the district had already determined, would center on a particular reform model (see: www.naschools.org for examples of such models). To select the reform model, the committee examined the needs of the school's student population in order to select the design they believed would have the best chance of improving student achievement.

The two main designs that the redesign committee considered for Parnell were The Edison Project and Direct Instruction (DI). The Edison Project is a for-profit corporation that contracts with districts to operate the entire school, whereas Direct Instruction is a comprehensive school reform model that the school would adopt and operate itself. The union representatives on the committee felt that Edison would be a good choice for the school, but both the district administrators and the community members favored DI. Many of the parents had seen a TV program on DI and its success with low-income, minority students, which convinced them that DI would be a good match for the student population at Parnell. All of the members of the redesign committee felt that a stronger literacy program was necessary at the school, and DI met that criterion. In addition, the district administrators believed that DI was better aligned with the principles of the district's strategic plan, Students First. For these reasons, DI was selected as the reform model for Parnell Elementary School.

The Direct Instruction Model incorporates teacher development and the organizational components needed to optimize the use of its literacy and math programs. The name "Direct Instruction" came from the idea that the teacher is responsible for directly providing the child with specific information about the topic being taught. The lessons are scripted in detail and tightly sequenced, telling the teacher exactly how long

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to spend on a particular lesson. Through extensive training and in-class coaching, teachers in the elementary grades (Parnell uses the program mainly for grades K-6) learn to present highly interactive lessons to small groups of students. Research has shown strong achievement effects for this method of teaching (Joyce & Weil, 1996[2]). Both the district administrators and the parents believed that this highly structured program was just what Parnell students needed to boost their achievement in literacy and mathematics. For more information about Direct Instruction, see: http://www.circleofinclusion.org/approaches/directinstruction.html.

Implementing Direct Instruction also involves adopting a different way of grouping students. Although the program does not require ability grouping for all subjects, it does encourage this practice when it can be beneficial to students. When the students are ability grouped for reading, their groups are determined by Direct Instruction assessments. When they are grouped for other subjects, teachers give the students various types of assessment tests in order to place them. At Parnell, each grade level makes the decision about whether they will ability group and for what subjects on the basis of the students and teachers at that particular grade level. So, for example, the second grade groups students according to ability for reading, with each different teacher teaching a different level, while in the third grade one teacher teaches reading to all of the students.

In order to support the goal of improving student achievement further, the school made a number of important decisions. First, they hired a full-time instructional facilitator trained in DI who could provide on-site coaching. Second, the school added an

[2] Joyce, B., & Weil, M. (1996). Direct Instruction. In V. Lanigan (Ed.), Models of Teaching (3rd ed., pp.

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additional hour of instructional time four days a week. (One of the ways the school found extra instructional time in its schedule was by eliminating recess.) Not only did they add this extra hour of instructional time, but they have gone as far as to block out the first hour and a half every day for 90 minutes of uninterrupted instructional time in literacy for all grades. During this time, specialist teachers provide support for struggling students. In addition, classroom teachers spend approximately 60 minutes on literacy in the afternoons, for a total of 150 minutes per day. Third, the school adopted a new reading curriculum from Harcourt Brace to ensure that teachers would have the materials they needed to implement the principles they learned from the Direct Instruction model. Fourth, the school adopted a new math curriculum, MEA for Primary, for the same reason. Teachers spend approximately 75 minutes a day on mathematics instruction.

Implementing Inclusion

Another goal of the redesign was to include all special education students who could be properly served in regular classrooms into that setting. During the previous school year, Parnell had six full-time special education teachers working in self-contained classrooms with students who had a particular type of disability. With the redesign, the school attempted to mainstream as many students as possible. To do so, the school could recommend that a certain student might benefit from being in a regular classroom, but the student's parent had to support the decision, and the student's IEP had to be changed. The school was successful in partially mainstreaming 11 students, who still go to resource rooms for part of the day's instruction. In addition, three other students formerly served completely in resource rooms are now mainstreamed only for Direct

343-352). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

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Instruction. Many teachers believe that Direct Instruction classrooms support inclusion because DI's highly structured design and practice of ability grouping meet the needs of special education students in ways that ordinary classrooms sometimes do not.

In addition to mainstreaming a few students, some of the special education programs that remained at the school became cross-categorical, meaning that one resource room teacher could serve students with different disabilities. For example, the two developmentally handicapped classrooms that remain at the school can now serve learning disabled students as well, eliminating the need for a separate resource room staffed by a special education teacher with expertise in teaching students with learning disabilities.

One of the reasons it was possible to include some special-needs students in regular classrooms at Parnell in the 1999-2000 school year was another redesign initiative, reduced class sizes, described in the next section.

Reduced Class Sizes

Another important aspect of the redesign plan was to organize students into small learning groups and provide them with the maximum amount of personal attention from teachers in core academic subjects. District leaders believed that reducing class sizes to approximately 15 in these subjects was one way to boost the redesigned schools' chance of success. The school shared this goal, but found that a lack of funding prevented them from reducing class sizes to the desired level. For the 1999-2000 school year, the average class size was reduced to an average of 18 (down from 25 in the previous year). However, if you consider the fact that the school did not have seventh and eighth grades in the previous year, and take those classes out of the average, class sizes have only been

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reduced to 20 in grades PreK-6. Even if this is not the class size reduction that the redesign plan called for, it did require four additional teachers for grades K-6 and four new teachers for the seventh and eighth grades. To accomplish this, resources had to be reallocated and some new resources were also necessary. Exactly how this was done will be covered in the second section of this case study.

Although the reduction in class size that occurred at Parnell was not to the level recommended by research (Achilles, 1999[3]), teachers at Parnell report that smaller classes have a number of advantages. Among the advantages are the ability to give more personal attention to students, less discipline problems because of better classroom management, and more time spent on-task as a result.

In addition, having smaller classes has enabled Parnell to schedule blocks of collaborative planning time by having more than one classroom of students attend a special subject at the same time. Not all class sizes are low enough to be combined for special subjects, but the ability to combine some of them made the district and school goal of providing collaborative planning time feasible. This will be explained further in the next two subsections.

Creating a Team-Based School

Another of the district priorities for the redesigned schools was to make them both team-based. These teams would then bear primary responsibility for making decisions about the school's instructional program and how resources are used. The redesign committee felt that vertical, or multi-grade teams would help create a collegial environment in which teachers could work together across grades to help students

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succeed. The idea is that by teaming across grade levels, teams stay with the same heterogeneous group of students until they meet the promotional standards. In order to put these teams in place, the district started by hiring a principal committed to the reform model. (As was previously mentioned, in this case, it was the principal who had been at the school during the previous year.)

In turn, the principal hired three team leaders to serve as the heads of the vertical teams. Next, the principal and team leaders selected the remainder of the teaching staff. The staff ended up being divided into three teams: one primary with grades K-3, one intermediate with grades 4-6, and one middle with grades 7-8. These teams are broken down further into smaller vertical teams of K-1, 2-3, 4-5-6, and 7-8, in order to make it easier to meet more frequently.

In addition to these vertical teams, the school also has horizontal teams, made up of teachers at the same grade level. The horizontal teams are useful for the grade-level issues that must be discussed.

Creating a Schedule to Support Team Planning

To enable these teams to work together, the next step was to create a schedule for teacher planning time that would allow teachers on the same team to meet during the school day. It was challenging to create such a schedule, particularly after having added the additional hour of instructional time to the school day, and the school was only successful at scheduling collaborative planning time during the school day for all of the horizontal teams. The larger vertical teams, primary, intermediate and middle, meet at least twice a month before or after school. The smaller vertical teams, most of whom

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[3] Achilles, Charles. (1999). Let's Put Kids First, Finally: Getting Class Size Right. Thousand Oaks, CA:

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also meet before or after school, meet every week. The middle school team meets during the last hour of the day, 4-6 meets on Friday at 2:00 p.m., and both K-1 and 2-3 meet after school. Table 1 illustrates both how the specials schedule accommodates teacher planning time and how the school day is organized into its different periods.

Table 1
Specials Schedule for Parnell Elementary School

Periods	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
8:00-9:30	Uninterrupted Instructional Time*									
9:30-10:10	8b	7b	7b	7a	8a	8b	7a	8a		
		8a		8a		7b		8b		8b
10:10-10:50	P	4b	P	P	P	7a	4b	4a	4a	P
		4a				4b		7b		4b
10:50-11:30	DH	5a	6b	DH	5b	P		6b	5a	5b
		6b		5b	5a	DH		5a	4a	DH
11:00-11:30	Lunch for Primary Grades (K-3)									
11:30-12:00	Lunch for Intermediate Grades (4-6)									
12:00-12:30	Lunch for Middle Grades (7-8)									
11:30-12:10	2a/b	Ka/b	2a/b	1a/b	1a/b	2a/b	Ka/b	1a/b		Ka/b
		1a/b				Ka/b		2a/b	1a/b	
12:10-12:50	Lunch for Specialist Teachers									
12:50-1:30	SBH			SBH						
				5a		4a		SBH	2a/b	SBH
1:30-2:10	3a/b			3a/b			3a/b			
	5b	P		4b		3a/b		5b	3a/b	P
2:10-2:50			P	P					2:00 p.m. early dismissal	
		7a		P	6b	P	DH			

*During this time, specialists teachers providing tutoring for struggling students.

The first 90 minutes of the day is set aside as an uninterrupted block of instructional time. For all of the other periods except lunch, each cell is divided into four to reflect the different special subjects. Clockwise from top left, these include art, music, gym and computers. So, for example, on Monday mornings at 9:30 a.m., as indicated by the shaded box in the Monday column, one classroom of eighth graders goes to art and the other goes to gym, enabling the eighth grade horizontal team to meet together for 40 minutes. Over the course of a week, this team will have the opportunity to meet one or

more times, but they are only obligated to meet once per week, at which time they must discuss instructional issues.

When "DH" or "SBH" appears on the table above, it means that that particular special education class, developmentally handicapped or severely behaviorally handicapped, respectively, has that particular special subject scheduled for that particular time. However, not all of the students in either of these special education classes go to all of the specials; their attendance in special subjects is based on their own particular needs and abilities.

When a "P" appears in the table above, it indicates that that particular specials teacher has planning at that particular time. A blank box indicates that no classroom is scheduled for that particular special at that particular time. As previously discussed, sometimes more than one classroom of students from the same grade level will go to a special subject at the same time, ensuring common planning time for teachers at that grade level. For example, see the shaded box in the Tuesday column of Table 1, showing that both classrooms of third grade students go to music between 1:30 and 2:10 p.m.

Although there are four special subjects shown on this table, there are only three special subject teachers at this school, one for art, one for music, and one for gym. Although computers are considered a special subject, teachers must accompany their students to the computer lab. Therefore, a classroom being scheduled for computers does not indicate that the teacher has planning at that particular time.

Professional Development

In order to make all of the aforementioned changes at Parnell, teachers needed new knowledge and skills. Most were unfamiliar with Direct Instruction, so a substantial

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amount of professional development had to take place before the redesigned school could open its doors. To ensure that the staff had proper training, the principal, facilitator and the team leaders for the primary and intermediate grades traveled to a Direct Instruction training site in Houston, Texas for an eight-day training program. When they returned, this group held on-site training for the rest of the staff. This training was unpaid, but because teachers were aware of this before being hired, they felt they had made a commitment to the redesign and were willing to volunteer their time.

In addition, having an on-site facilitator trained in Direct Instruction means that teachers get consistent feedback on their implementation of the program. In many ways, this is a form of ongoing professional development. Similarly, staff from Direct Instruction schools make at least three site visits per year where they evaluate each teacher individually and point out things that they may be able to improve upon. These site visits also function as a sort of ongoing professional development for Direct Instruction.

Teachers at Parnell also attended training sessions to help them gain the knowledge and skills required to implement other parts of the redesign. For example, all staff attended a three-day workshop to learn how to become a team-based school. This workshop was held at the district's professional development academy.

Teachers can attend any of the classes offered at the professional development academy. These classes are free of charge, but are held during after-school hours, so teachers must volunteer their time. Still, many teachers at Parnell have chosen to take advantage of such opportunities. For example, all teachers volunteered to take a

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mathematics standards and practice class in order to ensure that their students were getting the best mathematics instruction possible.

Accountability

In order to ensure that the redesign is successful, the district put a number of accountability measures in place at Parnell. First, the school is responsible for creating a One Plan, which is its plan for improving student achievement at the school. The school is paired with a district administrator who then works with the staff to create and maintain this plan for improvement. Second, the students at Parnell must take standardized tests to ensure that student achievement is indeed improving. These tests include the state-mandated proficiency tests in the fourth, sixth and eighth grades, as well as the Off-Grade Proficiency Tests (OGPT), which are administered in the spring to students in grades one, two, three, five and seven. In addition, instead of the California Achievement Test (CAT), a shorter norm-referenced test known as a survey test is administered to students in the first, third, fifth and seventh grades. Third, the school is still being monitored by the same accountability system that placed them in the school redesign category to begin with. Based on student achievement data, Parnell recently jumped up two categories, into the improvement category, even before the school was redesigned. Many attribute this increase to the leadership of the school principal, who came on board in 1998-1999. As soon as she found out that the school was being placed in the redesign category, she set to work motivating her staff to provide the best education possible for the children. Based on the tremendous improvement on standardized tests, she was very successful at doing so. This year, the school will attempt

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to make it into the highest category of the school assistance and redesign plan, school achievement.

Summary

These eight subsections have detailed all the changes that were made at Parnell when the school was redesigned. In the next section, we describe how resources are allocated to schools in this district, and then discuss how Parnell chose to use those resources to pay for all of the expensive elements of the redesign.

Paying for the Changes

Whenever reforms are adopted at the school level, changes must be made in the way school resources are spent. At this school, most of those decisions were made by the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), comprised of the principal, three lead teachers, and the two team leaders. Of course, some of the elements of the redesign were chosen by the district, and the ILT had to find a way to fund them. In order to trace which resources were reallocated, it is necessary to describe how this district allocates money to schools, which is explained in the following subsection. Having done that, the next subsection details the actual decisions that were made about staffing and resources at Parnell for the 1999-2000 school year.

District Allocation Method

This subsection provides the details of the staffing and resource allocations that Parnell Elementary School receives from the district, as well as from other sources. The method by which the school receives its allocations changed in the same year that the school was redesigned. Beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, the Sentry Hill School

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District created a *Students First* budget, which moved more control of funds and services to schools.

This budget model devolves a full 81 percent of the total operating budget to schools. Central office functions retained include approximately 10.3 percent for instructional and student support, 1.2 percent for district-provided professional development, 6 percent for administration, and 1.2 percent for fixed expenses. The remainder is budgeted to schools through a multi-faceted funding formula. About 75 percent of the delegated schools budget is allocated on the basis of pupils. The base allocation is $3830 per pupil. There are no grade level weights; regular students in K-12 are all counted as 1.0 pupils.

There are three categories of curriculum enhancement, two for magnet and one for vocational education programs. The primary magnet funding is provided through weights of 1.13, 1.22, 1.25 and 1.43 that reflect the different costs of the magnet program adopted. A few "minor" magnet programs are funded by program, with a lump-sum amount provided for the program to each school. The vocational education weights are 1.0 for students in grades 7-8 and 2.20 for students in grades 9-12.

For special student needs, there are four categories or levels of special education weights, each representing greater need: 1.34, 1.51, 2.55 and 2.85. There are two additional formula elements focused on special student needs. One is a non-standard allocation for very high cost special education programs that exist in only selected schools. The second is the formula used for allocating federal Title I dollars for students from low-income backgrounds. The dollars per pupil figure varies by the percentage of poverty students in each school. The figures range from $600 per pupil for schools with a poverty

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concentration above 94 percent (as calculated by the number of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch), to $225 for schools with a poverty concentration just below 50 percent.

The formula includes three school-based allocations. The first provides one principal, one plant operator, money for extracurricular advisors, funds for overtime, and 2.0 secretaries for each school. The second is for custodians, which is allocated on the basis of square footage of the building. The third covers both transportation and utilities, and is allocated to the schools on the basis of historic actual expenditures.

The final element is a new formula phase-in adjustment that will function only for 1999-2000, the initial year of the students-based budgeting formula. This adjustment limits changes in school budgets to one-third of the difference between what they would have received on the basis of the 1998-99 budget formula and the new per-pupil budget formula. This phase-in will not be used in 2000-2001 or thereafter.

In sum, the student-based budgeting model is designed to distribute money to schools in seven "layers," or categories of funding. These seven layers are illustrated in Table 2, which shows the 1999-2000 Budget Allocation for Parnell Elementary School. The first layer, which makes up 75 percent of school funding, is the per-pupil portion of the formula described above. Because of the redesign status of Parnell, all of its regular students are counted as magnet program students. This was one of the ways that the district tried to ensure the success of the redesign; administrators did not want the school reforms to falter because of a lack of funding. As a result, each regular student at Parnell (313 on Table 2) is weighted 1.13 rather than 1.0. Like all other schools in the district,

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Table 2
1999-2000 Budget Allocation for Parnell Elementary School

		OCT ADM*		
1. Student-based allocation		Wts.	# of Students	Student Units
Regular Program Students				
K - 3		1.000		-
4 - 6		1.000		-
7 - 8		1.000		-
9 - 12		1.000		-
Magnet Program Students				
Level 1		1.130	313.0	353.69
Level 2		1.220		-
Level 3		1.250		-
Level 4		1.430		-
Special Education Students				
Level 1		1.340		-
Level 2		1.510	42.0	63.42
Level 3		2.550	12.0	30.60
Level 4		2.850	15.0	42.75
Vocational Education Students				
Level 1-Gr 7-8		1.000		-
Level 2-Gr 9-12		2.200		-
Total Students			382.0	490.46
Base Allocation Per Student Unit				3,830.00
Student-based Allocation Dollars				1,878,461.80
2. School-based allocation				229,006.08
3. Program-based allocations				-
4. Special Education - Non-Standard				60,057.60
5. Custodians		$26,900	2.0	68,864.00
6. Actuals				
Carryover				26,954.26
Incentives				-
Lost Books				-
Transportation:				134,757.00
Yellow	116,596.00			
Metro				
MiniBus	83,868.00			
Utilities:				36,802.00
Electric	25,485.00			
Gas	20,113.00			
Water/Sewer	6,949.00			
Telephone				2,760.00
Total Actuals				201,273.26
7. First Year Phase-in Adjustment				(87,348.20)
Total Estimated Revenues				**2,350,314.54**

*Table 2 is based on the October Average Daily Membership count for 1999-2000.

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its special education students are weighted according to severity of need; as Table 2 illustrates, October ADM counts at Parnell show 42 students at level 2, 12 at level 3, and 15 at level 4.

The other 25 percent of the funding that goes to schools comprises the six remaining layers. The second layer is the school-based allocation, which refers to those budget items that are fixed costs that do not vary according to school size. These include one principal, one plant operator, money for extracurricular advisors and secretaries, and funds for overtime. The aggregate amount of the school-based allocation for Parnell, $229,006.08 can be found on Table 2 above.

Below, Table 3 provides an illustration of the specific allocations that make up Parnell's school-based allocation.

Table 3
School-based Allocation for Parnell Elementary School

Budget Item	Funding
Principal	$73,700.00
Plant Operator	$39,260.00
Schedule E Extracurricular Advisors	$14,344.00
Secretary/Clerks (2)	$50,730.00
ACPSOP Overtime	$877.00
Total School-based Staff Costs	$178,911.00
Fringe Benefits @ 28%	$50,095.08
Total School-based Allocation	$229,006.08

The third layer, called program-based allocations, is basically curriculum enhancement programs. These include special, small, school-based allocations for programs like ESL and minor magnets (magnet schools within a regular school). As Table 2 illustrates, Parnell did not receive any funding in this category.

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The fourth layer is a source of funding for those special education students that are very costly to educate. The district believes that allocating these funds in this way is the fairest way to help schools cover the costs of educating high-needs students. For 1999-2000, Parnell received a little over $60,000 to help cover the costs of educating children with extreme special needs.

The fifth layer is for custodians, which are allocated to schools on the basis of square footage. Parnell was allocated a total of $53,800.00 to hire 2.0 FTE custodians.

The sixth layer is a category for distributing funds to schools for various purposes on the basis of actual costs. It includes a carryover category, funding for incentives, money for lost books, and all sorts of transportation costs and utilities.

The final layer is a temporary one for the initial year of the students-based budgeting formula. It is an adjustment based on the schools' 98-99 budget allocation, implemented to ensure that schools neither lost nor gained too much from changing allocation processes. As it happened, Parnell was one of the schools that lost money because of the change in the allocation system. The district "took back" $87,348.20 from their regular allocation as a result of this adjustment.

In addition to the more than $2.3 million allocated to the school through this new student-based allocation method, the school also receives federal compensatory education funding, or Title I. For Parnell, this totaled about $600 per Title I eligible pupil because of its high concentration of students from poverty backgrounds. Because the majority of the students who attend Parnell come from low-income families, the school is eligible to apply its Title I funds to a number of different schoolwide programs. The way Parnell decided to spend these funds is explained in the next subsection.

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How Parnell Allocated Its Resources to Afford Its New Programs

The last subsection described how the Sentry Hill School District allocated funds to Parnell Elementary School during the first year of the redesign. This next subsection focuses on how those funds were used to pay for the various reforms. Because this was the first year that schools had control over such a large portion of their budgets, it was a learning experience and the school principal and lead teachers were perhaps not terribly experienced at spending their own budget. The lack of familiarity with such a large budget may have caused the ILT to make many of the same spending decisions as they had in the past. As a result, perhaps not as many resources were reallocated to the needs of the redesign as was possible, but this section examines the changes that were made.

Because the majority of the changes involved staffing the school differently, this subsection will provide an explanation of how this school is staffed according to six staffing categories, highlighting the changes to the way it was staffed before the redesign. In addition, other expenditures necessary to implement the elements of the redesign will be detailed. For this purpose, the six categories of staffing are:

1. Classroom teachers: Teachers of the core curriculum.
2. Regular education specialists: Teachers of subjects outside the core curriculum, such as art, physical education, library and music, who also provide planning and preparation time for classroom teachers.
3. Categorical program specialists: Teachers outside the regular education classroom whose salaries are paid largely by categorical program dollars, including special education, compensatory education (Title I), bilingual/ESL and other programs for special needs students.
4. Pupil support specialists: Professional staff who provide non-academic support services to students outside the regular education classroom, such as guidance counselors, psychologists and nurses.

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5. Aides: Paraprofessional staff who provide either instructional support (including working one-on-one with children both within the regular classroom and in resource rooms) or non-instructional support (including clerical tasks and supervising the cafeteria and/or playground).

6. Other Staff: Any other staff employed by the school, including clerical, cafeteria and custodial workers.

Classroom teachers

As section one described, part of the redesign at Parnell was the district decision that the school should reduce class sizes to approximately 15 students per classroom. As it turned out, class sizes were not reduced to this extent at Parnell. Still, reducing class sizes to the extent that they did meant that more money had to be allocated for classroom teachers. In the same year as the redesign, Parnell added seventh and eighth grades, for which the school hired four additional classroom teachers. However, all four of these teachers should not be counted as being paid for through resource reallocation since some new teaching positions were necessary as a result of the new seventh and eighth grade students. Still, if reduced class sizes had not been a priority, the school would not have had to hire four teachers to serve these students. Only 24 seventh graders and 20 eighth graders were moved to Parnell, and these students could have been served with two classroom teachers if the school had not been trying to reduce class sizes to 15. Therefore, two of these teachers can be thought of as being paid for out of resources that could have been applied elsewhere. The funds to pay for these teachers came from the school's general fund allocation, but the reason they had the extra funds to hire these teachers is likely due to the extra money that the district allocated by classifying all of the school's students as magnet program students.

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In addition to the teachers hired to serve the seventh and eighth graders, the school hired four additional classroom teachers to lower class sizes in grades PreK-6. To get the extra money for these teachers, the ILT at the school reallocated some resources and the district allocated additional resources for this purpose, as detailed in the following paragraphs.

Table 4
1999-2000 Title I Allocation for Parnell Elementary School

	Amount	FTEs
TOTAL ALLOCATION	$193,600.00	
Salaries & Wages:		
Certificated Personnel Standard Allocation: Teacher – Elementary	$106,080.00*	2.0
Civil Service Personnel Instructor Assistants (I/A)	$30,387	2.5
Nonpersonnel Expenses:		
Instructional Supplies	$10,422.00	
Supplemental Text	$5,000.00	
Student Incentives	$2,000.00	
Capital Outlay/New Equipment	$1500.00	
Totals		
Personnel + Fringe Benefits (28.00 %)	$136,467.00 +$38,211.00 $174,678.00	
Nonpersonnel	$18,922.00	
TOTAL BUDGET	$193,600.00	

*The Sentry Hill School District instructs schools to use the average salary figure for teachers ($53,040) rather than actuals, based on the theory that this practice avoids "personnel game playing" and ensures that the best qualified teacher is in the classroom, regardless of salary.

First, at the request of the district, the school decided to eliminate some positions altogether. Although most schools in the Sentry Hill District have instructional assistants to help teachers, the number of these positions at Parnell was reduced from 7 to 2, freeing

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up enough funds so that the school could afford to hire approximately two more classroom teachers. Second, the school reallocated some of its Title I resources in order to pay for an additional classroom teacher, as illustrated on Table 4 above. In the previous year, the Title I funding was used primarily for design-specific staff development costs, which this year are being paid by the district. This year, Title I is used to fund an additional classroom teacher. This will be discussed in more detail in the subsection entitled "Other Allocations to the Redesign".

The district also decided to supplement Parnell's budget in a number of important ways that allowed them to hire additional classroom teachers without spending their entire budget. As explained in the subsection on the District Allocation Method, Parnell students were weighted slightly higher than most elementary students in the district because of its redesign status (1.3 as compared to 1.0). This extra money was used to hire the two additional teachers for the seventh and eighth grades, as well as to make up the difference from the number of instructional aides cut and the number of additional teachers the school was able to afford to hire. Also, because of a district decision to concentrate its discretionary resources where they were needed most, the school received enough money to pay for one additional classroom teacher through the federal class-size reduction initiative that gave extra money to school districts around the country to reduce class size.

All of the reallocations and extra funding listed above enabled the school to hire four additional classroom teachers for grades K-6, plus two more than necessary for "normal" class sizes in grades 7-8. Still, this was not enough to reduce most class sizes to 15, but it was sufficient to reduce the average PreK-8 class to 18. The combination of

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funding other school priorities and a tight budget made it impossible for Parnell to get class sizes as low as 15.

Regular Education Specialists

Another important part of the redesign at Parnell was creating a team-based school. As was explained previously, Parnell organized its teachers into both horizontal and vertical teams. The district's goal was for the school to give these teams 90 minutes per day of collaborative planning time. This was quite a challenge, especially since Parnell added an hour of instructional time in the first year of the redesign as well.

However, because of the other demands of the school schedule, the ILT could not find a way to provide 90 minutes per day of uninterrupted planning time for teacher teams. Instead, school leaders emphasized the importance of the 90-minute block of uninterrupted instructional time each morning, and relied on the fact that the teachers at Parnell were so committed to the redesign that they would be willing to meet either before or after school or on weekends whenever necessary. So the school hired three regular education specialists, one for art, one for music, and one for physical education. Instead of getting 90 minutes per day of uninterrupted planning time, teachers get 40 minutes each day. At least once a week, this planning time coincides with the other teacher at the same grade level, ensuring that horizontal teams get to meet at least once a week during the regular school day. As explained in the first section, the vertical teams meet at various times before or after school a couple of times each month. All teachers also have a half-hour preparation period before the students arrive at school.

Still, the fact that all the teachers at the school get 40 minutes per day of uninterrupted planning time, and have the opportunity to meet with their horizontal team

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weekly during the regular school day, is quite an accomplishment considering that the school also managed to add an hour of instructional time four days per week. As was previously mentioned, part of the reason this was possible at Parnell is the reduced class sizes; the same regular education specialist can relieve more than one classroom teacher for a planning period. Because of this, it was not necessary to reallocate resources either to or from this staffing category to implement the redesign. It should be noted, however, that Parnell uses its regular education specialists to provide tutoring to students during the uninterrupted block of instructional time each morning. This is an example of a creative practice that allows the school to concentrate its resources on the core academic subjects without having to allocate any additional resources.

The district did make an additional staffing suggestion that the school followed through on that affected the regular education specialist category. During the previous school year, Parnell had employed a full-time librarian. But because the idea behind the redesign was to concentrate resources on raising student achievement levels in reading and math, both the district and the school decided that using these resources to hire a full-time instructional facilitator trained in Direct Instruction would be a better choice. Therefore, the librarian position was eliminated. Happily, a woman from the community now volunteers her time three days a week in the library. This creative community partnership has enabled the school to continue to use the library by having someone staff the library part-time, while concentrating its school resources on the core academic subjects.

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Categorical Program Specialists

Many schools that undergo significant school reform reallocate the most money within the categorical program specialist category. While this was not true for Parnell, a substantial amount of reallocation of these dollars did take place. Categorical program funds can include English as a Second Language (ESL), compensatory education (mainly federal Title I funds), and special education. Because no ESL students attend Parnell, the school does not receive any ESL funding.

However, there was a change in the way Title I funds were allocated after the redesign. Table 4 shows how the school used the funding in 1999-2000, when the majority of the funding was used to pay for two teachers. In the previous year, only one teacher had been funded with Title I, and most of the remaining funding was used to cover design-specific professional development costs, which the district agreed to pay for when the school was redesigned and adopted Direct Instruction.

In terms of special education, a number of changes were made to the delivery of services for some special education students, but none of these affected the allocation of special education dollars. For example, although approximately 14 students are now mainstreamed for part of the day, they still require resource room services as well. Although the school initially hoped it could make do with one less resource room teacher, they found these special education rooms short-staffed and ended up hiring the same number (six) of special education teachers as had been employed at the school during the previous year. In addition, the move to make some of the special education programs cross-categorical, which the staff says has made some aspects of its special education

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program more effective, has not enabled the school to reduce the number of special education teachers on staff.

Pupil Support Specialists

In the year before the redesign at Parnell, there were not enough funds available for the school to hire guidance counselors. When the ILT was working out the budget for 1999-2000, other costs of the redesign prevented them from hiring guidance counselors again, even though the school staff believed these positions would be helpful in turning around the redesigned school. The only allocation from the school budget for mental and social services for students at Parnell is a 0.2 FTE psychologist who comes to the school just one day per week. However, once again this is a case where the school managed to form a community partnership that allowed their students to benefit from services that they did not have the money to fund from the school budget. In fact, the school felt very lucky to form this community partnership because the agency handpicked the school as the one they wanted to try to help. As a result, the school has volunteers that add up to the equivalent of a 0.8 FTE psychologist, a 1.0 FTE parent center coordinator, and 2.0 FTE social workers providing social and mental health services to students at no cost to the school.

Aides

As was noted previously, the redesign plan that prioritized class-size reduction specified that one way to pay for more classroom teachers would be to eliminate regular education instructional aide positions. In the past, many teachers at Parnell had instructional assistants working alongside them in their classrooms. However, with lower class sizes, both the authors of the redesign and the ILT believed that most of these

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assistants would no longer be necessary. Therefore, five instructional aide positions were cut, allowing the school to hire approximately two additional classroom teachers.

This represents a significant reallocation of resources, and one that could potentially create a problem for teachers. However, the principal was able to convince the staff that this was the best decision for the school in terms of student learning. Some teachers complained that there is not enough help performing some of the tasks that instructional assistants sometimes perform, but because these teachers were aware that this would be the case when they took the job, there has not been a significant problem from the reduction of these positions.

At the same time, this represents an area where more resources could have been reallocated. The district suggestion was to eliminate all regular education instructional aides; the school chose to keep 2.5 FTE of these positions on staff.

Other Staff

None of the staff positions that fall into the category of "other staff," including clerical, custodial and cafeteria workers, were reallocated for the sake of the redesigned school. Neither the school staff nor the authors of the redesign plan thought it necessary to reallocate resources in this category.

Other Allocations to the Redesign

As the last few subsections have shown, staffing made up the largest share of the costs of the redesign. However, Parnell's redesign involved one major area of expense that did not involve staff – the design-based costs for professional development and instructional materials. Although the school was required to find ways to reallocate its resources to cover many of the operational costs of implementing Direct Instruction,

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including the full-time instructional facilitator, the district agreed to pay for the program's required professional development and instructional materials. Basically, the school believed it did not have the capacity to pay for these elements with its budget, and the district felt that the redesign was important enough that it was necessary to cover these costs. The cost of training services provided by Direct Instruction is approximately $65,000 per year, and this does not include travel costs. In this, the first year of implementation, the district paid both the $65,000 fee and the travel costs for five staff members to go to the training in Texas.

The design-based instructional materials are another expensive element of Direct Instruction. These materials cost about $125 per pupil each year. Since Parnell uses Direct Instruction primarily for students in grades K-6, this amounts to approximately $34,500 for materials. However, the actual cost was a little bit higher because the pre-kindergarten students use one element of the program, called Language for Learning, and some students in the middle grades who are struggling with math or reading also use some Direct Instruction materials.

Although Parnell had to reallocate its resources in order to afford many of the elements of the redesign, when the school came up short of the funds necessary to pay for its chosen design, the district stepped in and took care of the extra costs. This shows the commitment of this district to the redesign of this school, as well as the limitations of a school staff attempting to budget for many different expensive strategies. While it is true that Parnell had less money in its budget than the other school in the same district that was redesigned, it is also true that the school staff itself made more of the budgetary decisions at Parnell. This may have meant that other school priorities, such as retaining

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some of the instructional aides for regular education, were funded even though the school staff did not have enough money to pay for all the elements of the school design they had chosen.

Conclusion

With its new accountability system in place, Sentry Hill School District was committed to redesigning schools whose students consistently scored poorly on achievement tests. In 1999-2000, the first year that the redesign process was in place, the district changed its allocation method to a student-based formula that gave more control over school-level resources to the schools. Parnell Elementary School was one of two schools to operate under the new budgetary system *and* be redesigned in the same year.

Redesigning the school meant removing all current staff, but because the principal had been new to the school in the previous year and seemed to be making positive improvements, she was rehired. Some of the teachers who had previously taught at the school were also rehired. Because of this, most of the decisions about the redesign and how resources would be reallocated to fund it were made by the school's instructional leadership team (ILT), made up of the principal, lead teachers and team leaders. Although the district came up with a redesign plan based on its Students First Strategic Plan, it was the ILT that made many of the final decisions about the redesign's characteristics. The list below illustrates the elements of the redesign actually put in place at the school.

1. A whole school reform model and a full-time instructional facilitator.
2. An emphasis on core academic subjects – new math and reading curricula.

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3. An additional hour of instructional time four days per week, enabling the school to schedule a 90-minute uninterrupted block of instructional time every morning, when specialist teachers provide tutoring.

4. Reduced class sizes of approximately 20 students per classroom in grades PreK-6, and 11 in grades 7 and 8.

5. Inclusion of special education students in regular classrooms to the greatest possible extent.

6. Organizing the school into both vertical and horizontal teams.

7. Providing daily, uninterrupted planning time for teachers during the school day, including common planning time for horizontal teams at least once a week.

Even if Parnell did not manage to make all of the changes recommended by the district redesign team, the school made a number of significant changes in the year of the redesign. Indeed, Parnell had a pretty tight budget, and the fact that the school lost money as a result of the district's change in allocation method did not help the school afford everything the redesign plan had specified. Still, in order to implement all of the changes that were made, school resources had to be reallocated and some new resources had to be garnered.

The majority of the reallocated resources went toward funding the four additional classroom teachers necessary to reduce class sizes from 25 to 20 in grades PreK-6. To do this, the school eliminated five regular education instructional aide positions and used the funds to pay for approximately two additional classroom teachers. To fund the third teacher, Federal Title I dollars were reallocated by having the district pay for the design-based professional development and instructional materials. The fourth teacher was funded with federal class-size reduction money that the district passed on to the school. In addition, because the school added a seventh and an eighth grade in the same year as the redesign, the school had to hire additional teachers for these grades. With only 44

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students total for both grades, the school might have chosen to hire only two teachers had it not been trying to achieve lower class sizes. Because of this, two of the four additional teachers hired for the middle grades can be considered as being funded by resource reallocation. To get the money for these teachers, the school tapped into the extra funds that they had been given by the district in the form of an extra .13 weighting for every student.

Another reallocation to help fund the redesign was the conversion of the librarian position to a full-time instructional facilitator trained in Direct Instruction. When added to the other six new positions described in the preceding paragraph (not counting the two new teachers that would have been necessary for the seventh and eighth graders even without the redesign), the school was able to fund seven new positions through dramatic resource reallocation. This reallocation of resources allowed the school to reduce class sizes and concentrate resources on raising the level of student achievement at Parnell.

It should also be emphasized that the staff at Parnell was successful in creating two community partnerships to help staff the school in ways the school budget could not or would not afford. Having exchanged its librarian for an instructional facilitator, the school enlisted the support of a volunteer from the community so that its students would still be able to benefit from using the library. Similarly, although the school budget did not include funds for a guidance counselor either before or after the redesign, the school staff knew that such a position would really help tip the scales toward making a real difference with their students. There were some services that the students required that the regular classroom teachers did not have the time or the expertise to provide. Therefore, the school formed a partnership with another community group looking to

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make a difference in a Sentry Hill school, and as a result the students have access to numerous social and mental health services at no cost to the school.

All of the changes made for the 1999-2000 school year were a result of either creative reallocation of resources within the school budget, the district's extra investment in the desired success of the redesigned school, or creative community partnerships. While it is too early to say whether these efforts will result in an increase in student achievement scores, it can certainly be said that Parnell has made a number of steps in that direction. Indeed, even before the redesign, this principal managed to raise student achievement scores. Now, with teams of teachers committed to a new method of teaching (Direct Instruction), and supported by many elements of the redesign – horizontal and vertical teaming, planning time for teacher teams, a full-time instructional facilitator, and ongoing professional development – the school has made tremendous strides toward continued improvement in the academic success of its students. Research suggests that these are exactly the kind of changes that must be made in schools to realize significant gains in student achievement (King and Newmann, 1999[4]; National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability, 1998[5]). Parnell Elementary School serves as an example of a school that, with leadership and support from the district, has been dramatically restructured so that more of its resources are used in the best possible ways for boosting student achievement.

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[4] King, M. Bruce, and Fred M. Newmann. (1999). School Capacity as a Goal For Professional Development: Mapping the Terrain in Low-Income Schools. Paper prepared for the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Wisconsin Madison.

[5] National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching. (1998). "Principles for Effective Professional Development." Available online: http://www.npeat.org/.

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